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• LEADING ARTICLE

Cross-Cultural Application of Critical and Progressive Theories in Public Administration

..... *Richard C. Box* 1

Abstract Efficiency is of great importance in public administration, but there are other perspectives that are also important for the field. This paper discusses application of critical and progressive theories in public administration; these are bodies of writing that advocate thinking beyond current societal circumstances to create a future different from the present. In addition to this description of some elements of critical and progressive thought, the paper includes analysis of the potential for cross-cultural use of critical and progressive theories and suggests how they might be useful in China.

Key Words Critical Social Theory, Progressive Theory, Cross-Cultural Application, Progressive Values

• SYMPOSIUM: SOCIAL POLICY

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Globalization and the Development of Social Policy

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Abstract The article highlights several dimensions of globalization and discusses the importance of globalization for the development of social policy. Based on the research literature it is argued that one can distinguish between economic, political and cultural globalization, and indicators of these dimensions are discussed. The literature on the impact of economic globalization on social policy or welfare state

development has arrived at different conclusions. The point is made that economic globalization counts, but global and/or national political and cultural factors decide what kind of social policy development is likely. The conclusion is that social policy development can only be understood if also the political and cultural aspects of globalization are taken into account.

Key Words Globalization; Economic, Political, Cultural Dimensions; Social Policy; Welfare States

Analyzing Health Insurance Reform in China: A Welfare Pluralist Perspective

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Abstract From a welfare pluralist perspective, which is a prevalent paradigm for social welfare and social policy analysis in the West in recent years, this paper analyzes findings from a survey focusing on issue of health insurance reform in urban China. It finds that the medical security provided varies enormously due mainly to various combinations among government, market and society. This means individuals as members of different social groups are entitled to basic medical security at very different level. How to define the responsibility of government and market in providing medical security will be critical to the health insurance reform in China. It is argued that such a defined role is not only determining the process and results of the reform, but also serving as a cornerstone for the establishment of a multi-level medical security system and the goal of the “universal health insurance”.

Key Words Welfare Pluralism, Health Insurance System, Tripartite Funding Mechanism

The Malays and Education Policy in Singapore

..... *Michael H. Lee* 52

Abstract Since the independence of Singapore in 1965, education has been identified as one of the most important public policy areas for engineering the ongoing process of industrialization and economic development by guaranteeing high quality human resources. Moreover the importance of education lies in its function of improving the socio-economic status and living quality of individuals and maintaining

socio-political stability and racial harmony, which is extremely crucial for Singapore as a multi-racial society where Chinese, Malays, and Indian Tamils are three major racial groups residing in Singapore. The core principle of Singapore's education policy is therefore to ensure equal educational opportunity for all students regardless their racial origins. Therefore the logic of meritocracy is adopted to facilitate fair competition among ethnic groups for educational achievement and socio-economic status in the Singapore society. In fact, the Malays in Singapore are found to have inferior performance than their Chinese and Indian counterparts in the education system even though the principles of equal educational opportunity and meritocracy are upheld. In response, this article aims at reviewing major development of education policies on the Singapore-Malays and the impact of those policies on their educational performance, which is closely related to their socio-economic status, over the past 40 years. In addition, the article will shed light on the ongoing debate about the "educational marginalization" of the Singapore-Malay community as put forward by L.Z. Rahim (1998), whose controversial book entitled *The Singapore Dilemma: The Political and Educational Marginality of the Malay Community* aroused widespread concerns over the prospects of the Malay community in Singapore. Although the issue of racial difference in terms of educational achievement and socio-economic status is sensitive for Singapore as a multi-racial society, it is important for the government to sort out viable policies and solutions to rectify the situation so as to facilitate socio-political stability in the long run.

Key Words Singapore, Malays, Educational Achievement, Socio-economic Status, Racial Harmony

Housing in the “Progressive Era” and Its Implications

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Abstract The United States was in an unprecedented social and economic transformation in the “Progressive Era”, when rapid industrialization and urbanization and the influx of immigrants brought about severe housing problems. The need of sheltering the low income workers and immigrants was sufficiently met in the market while government was being irresponsible. Against such a context, a housing movement and various organized activities had been launched in an attempt to press the government to address the housing issue. This paper analyzes the

formation of housing problems in the “Progressive Era” along with the responses and countermeasures taken by the Progressists in dealing with them, and examines their achievements. It concludes by highlighting the implications of the American housing experiences in the “Progressive Era” on China.

Key Words The Progressive Era, Housing Problems, Housing Movement

● ARTICLES

Labor Inspection Regime in Transition in Contemporary China: An Integrated Research from the Perspective of Governance

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Abstract Based on the publicly published documents and information collected from the field survey, this article is carrying out a descriptive research on the labor inspection regime in China on the perspective of Social Regulation. We examine two important parts of labor inspection — the regulator and regulation process. The basic conclusion is: under the background of economic reform and unemployment crisis, as a kind of close and exclusive administration, labor inspection in China is likely to face the regulation crisis as well as crisis of legalism. Labor inspection as a kind of social conversation can hardly emerge due to the lack of pluralistic participation; instead, lacking in ways for stake-holders to voice, the scope that state can affect is also limited. This is the fundamental reason why labor inspection in China suffers high cost. Only by transferring from government-dominated regulation to plural-participative governance in which the government, market and society complement and balance with each other, and by building up a kind of labor inspection as social conversation, can the increasing social expectation of plural-stakeholders be satisfied, the aberrant ab-institutionalized and ab-legalized behaviors be diminished, the cost of social governance be virtually reduced, and the harmonious labor relationship be constructed.

Key Words Labor Inspection Regime, Regulation, Institution-Building

An Empirical Analysis on Administration Expenditure of China, 1978 – 2006

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Abstract In last three decades, great achievements have been witnessed in the

modernization of China. However, the issue of high administration expenditure is still an unresolved problem after several waves of reform in the administration system. By comparable prices, China's administration expenditure (the actual total cost including extra-budgetary as well as the budget costs) increased rapidly between 1978 and 2006 at a pace much faster than that of GDP, government revenue and government expenditure. The growth rate of the total expenditure and budget per capita in China is higher than that of each person's disposable income. Elasticity coefficient of administration expenditures shows that China's administration expenditure is growing too fast, the variation coefficient of administration expenses' growth and its cyclical variation indicates that China's administration expenditure is growing unsteadily and is somewhat out of control. Meanwhile the economic output yielded by an average unit of administration expenditure is decreasing. The direct reasons of the increase in administration expenditure lie in that the total paid rate of administration staff is growing too fast which was a result of a sustained, rapid increase in the amount of administration staff, and that the fixed asset invested in administration department. In addition, other expenditures such as official activities are also growing rapidly. It is a major political and economic task in the modernization and national long-term stability to reduce administration expenditure with every measure. Measures like rigid constraints and budget monitoring within legal system are recommended in this paper.

Key Words Administration Expenditure, Elasticity Coefficient, Variation Coefficient, Empirical Analysis

● THEORETICAL REVIEW

A Review on the Reflections of Chinese Public Administration Studies, 1996 - 2008

..... Yanling He 157

Abstract A general consensus on reflecting Chinese public administration studies is that, public administration studies are confronted with the problems of localization and standardization during its rapid development as a discipline. An identity crisis to some extent hidden in the evolution of public administration studies in China is implied by such dual-plights. It is becoming an imminent and pressing task to establish a kind of public administration studies with Chinese characteristics, *viz.* a

discipline combining Chinese style, Chinese manner, and Chinese standard. On the issue of how to ravel out the identity crisis, existing reflection works present a series of divergences upon the alternative adoptions of countermeasures research or issue research, empirical research or non-empirical research, qualitative research or quantitative research. In light of the status in quo of Chinese public administration studies, the accumulation of empirical researches on administration studies pointing to *de facto* administrative practice is of vital importance and great significance.

Key Words Public Administration Studies, Reflections, Review

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